

*Appendix B – Fish Creek Project Draft EA*



***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

**FISH CREEK  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA  
AND  
FISH CREEK STATE PARK**

***~DRAFT PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT  
PLAN~***

December 2009

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**FISH CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA AND  
FISH CREEK STATE PARK**

***DRAFT PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT PLAN***

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PART 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 – Location
- 1.2 – Site Designation & Administration
- 1.3 – Management Responsibilities

PART 2.0 – VISION STATEMENT

PART 3.0 – PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE PLAN

PART 4.0 – RESOURCE VALUES

- 4.1 – Fisheries & Aquatic Resources
- 4.2 – Wildlife Resources
- 4.3 – Vegetation
- 4.4 – Heritage Resources
- 4.5 – Geological Resources
- 4.6 – Recreation Resources
- 4.7 – Aesthetic Resources
- 4.8 – Neighboring Properties

PART 5.0 – NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 – Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Management
- 5.2 – Wildlife Resource Management
- 5.3 – Vegetation Management
- 5.2 – Noxious Weed Management

PART 6.0 – HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

PART 7.0 – RECREATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 – Public Access
- 7.2 – Public Use Regulations
- 7.3 – Marketing
- 7.4 – Camping
- 7.5 – Williams Peak Lookout
- 7.6 – River Recreation
- 7.7 – Trails
- 7.8 – Hunting
- 7.9 – Angling
- 7.10 – Education and Interpretation
- 7.11 – Commercial Use
- 7.12 – Public Safety

PART 8.0 – ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, & MAINTENANCE

PART 9.0 – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

APPENDICES

## **PART 1.0 – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Location**

The Fish Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Fish Creek State Park are located approximately 41 miles west of Missoula, Montana between Alberton and Tarkio along Interstate 90. Portions of the property lay both north and south of the Interstate and Clark Fork River in the Nemote Creek and Fish Creek drainages, respectively. The property borders the Lolo National Forest (~ 140,000 acres), Department of Natural Resources Conservation lands (~ 6,000 acres), and some private lands (< 2% of the drainage). Most of the upper basin of the drainage is roadless and proposed Wilderness (Great Burn).

### **1.2 Site Designation & Administration**

The Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park encompass 40,945 acres of important upland and riparian habitats with exceptional wildlife, fisheries and recreation resource values. To protect and enhance these resource values, the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park would be established in 2010 and jointly administered and managed by the Region 2 Fish & Wildlife and Parks Divisions of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP).

This is a preliminary management plan that MFWP will use in the interim until a final management plan can be developed over the next 36 months. A final management plan will be the result of a public involvement process that includes an environmental assessment, public meetings, opportunity for public input, and discussions with neighboring property owners.

### **1.3 Management Responsibilities**

The Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park would be managed as two distinct areas. Approximately 6,900 acres south of the Clark Fork River adjacent to Fish Creek would be designated as a State Park and managed by the Parks Division. The remaining acres (~ 34,000) would be designated as a Wildlife Management Area and managed by the Fish & Wildlife Division (See map in Appendix A). The Fish & Wildlife and Parks Divisions will adhere to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in managing overlapping resource values of the WMA and State Park (See Appendix B).

## **PART 2.0 – VISION STATEMENT**

The Fish Creek Project represents a unique approach to providing for the public interest in the fish, wildlife and recreation resources of an entire watershed. It recognizes and builds upon the interconnection between public resources and the public's enjoyment of those resources. It not only acknowledges the public's place alongside fish and wildlife on the Fish Creek landscape, as has "always" been, but also applies recreation management alongside habitat management as a tool for the perpetual conservation of the fish and wildlife resources upon which such recreation depends. The Fish Creek Project is one model for bringing multiple funding sources and constituencies together to achieve conservation at a scale that cannot be accomplished parcel by parcel.

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

The Fish Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) would be dedicated to the protection and perpetuation of fish and wildlife resources first. The WMA would constitute the largest portion of the Fish Creek Project area, which corresponds with the large and connected landscapes needed to support wild, intact fish and wildlife populations. The WMA would remain in its primitive condition to maximize wildlife use on the land, and to perpetuate the long tradition of hunting, fishing, and other recreation tied to undeveloped expanses. Recreationists on the WMA would be self reliant, and should expect to find few if any amenities beyond a system of open and closed roads on existing roadbeds.

The Fish Creek State Park, along with the adjacent Alberton Gorge, would provide a large landscape State Park in western Montana with a diverse array of recreational opportunities. Infrastructure and amenities would be developed to accomplish State Park goals, provide for site stewardship, protect natural and cultural resources, and support an enjoyable, safe, comfortable, and educational visitor experience. A developed State Park footprint and developed facilities would appropriately accommodate recreationists and could minimize potential impacts to riparian and other sensitive sites within the WMA as well as keep human-human and human-wildlife encounters on the WMA at low levels. Potential future opportunities would attract new users/user-groups providing potential economic benefit to Mineral County and could include trail systems, hut-to-hut hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, a fire lookout rental, equestrian campground, and expanded camping opportunities to meet increasing demand in the Alberton Gorge and Fish Creek areas.

### **PART 3.0 – PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

The purpose of this plan, in conjunction with the MOU provided in Appendix B, is to provide management direction for the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park for an interim time period (~36 months) until a final management plan can be developed.

### **PART 4.0 – RESOURCE VALUES**

#### **4.1 Fisheries & Aquatic Resources**

Fish Creek is the largest tributary basin within the middle Clark Fork River drainage. It is a wild and productive watershed with unusually high fisheries and aquatic value. Fish Creek supports some of the best remaining native fish populations in the area, provides a major source of salmonid recruitment for the Clark Fork River, and offers an excellent trout fishery throughout most of its reaches. Lower reaches (including the mouth) also offer an invaluable thermal refuge for Clark Fork River fish during the summer as water temperatures are typically 8-12° F cooler in Fish Creek. Most tributaries within the watershed offer high quality spawning and rearing habitat for trout. Intact tributary habitat, excellent water quality, consistent instream flows and good connectivity among stream and river reaches have made Fish Creek a stronghold for migratory (fluvial) bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout in western Montana. Fish Creek currently supports more fluvial bull trout redds than all other middle Clark Fork

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

tributaries combined and the drainage contains numerous (>20) westslope cutthroat trout populations, many of which are genetically non-introgressed. Other fish species present include mountain whitefish and sculpin species, as well as introduced brook trout, brown trout and rainbow trout. The main stem and primary forks provide a popular trout fishery that supports > 1,000 days of angler pressure annually.

The Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park include portions of several other, smaller tributary drainages that lie outside of Fish Creek. Two of these, Rock Creek (just west of Fish Creek) and Nemote Creek (north of the Clark Fork River), exhibit perennial flows in upper reaches and support fish. Both of these streams contain non-introgressed westslope cutthroat trout populations in headwater reaches, but neither stream is readily accessible to fish from the Clark Fork River for spawning due to anthropogenic migration barriers (primarily transportation crossings).

### **4.2 Wildlife Resources**

The landscapes within and surrounding the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park have a suite of incredibly high wildlife resource values. There is a minimum of 182 wildlife species (57 mammals, 115 birds, 5 amphibians, and 5 reptiles) that biologists have either verified on or near the property, or are likely to be found within the drainage (See Appendix C). Of those, 31 terrestrial vertebrate species of concern (SOC) have been verified or are potentially found within the Fish Creek Project area, with 12 of those identified as Tier 1 species (See Appendix D). Also, there are six potential species of concern (including one Tier 1 species), and one additional Tier 1 species, which was recently removed from the SOC list. During the first 2-years of this Preliminary Management Plan, MFWP would conduct a wildlife inventory (discussed in more detail in section 5.2) on the subject property that should result in additional species added to Appendices C and D.

The Fish Creek drainage is a very high priority forest carnivore linkage zone. This linkage zone provides broad-scale landscape connectivity for forest carnivores (grizzly bear, Canada lynx, wolverine, and others) from the Mission and Rattlesnake Wilderness areas, through the Ninemile Divide, to the Selway-Bitterroot Mountains and Wilderness. Providing connectivity among ecosystems is essential for maintaining viable populations and recovering forest carnivores that are threatened, endangered, or species of concern. Grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and wolverine activity have occurred within the Fish Creek drainage or on its adjacent lands, but there still is much to learn about their overall utilization of these habitats.

The Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park provides significant winter range and other seasonal habitats for elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer and moose. The property also supports diverse populations of large carnivores, furbearers and upland game birds, including black bear, mountain lion, wolf, mountain grouse and wild turkey. The subject property contains nearly 34,000 acres of winter range for approximately 500 elk. The intact, productive riparian corridors of Fish Creek and its tributaries have exceptional habitat for white-tailed deer and moose, while the drier upland slopes provide forage and browse for mule deer. Riparian and wetland habitats within the drainage also

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

support the richest diversity and density of birds, small rodents and shrews. These habitat types also provide breeding sites and travel corridors for amphibians, and are the most important foraging habitat for most bat species.

With all of the above-mentioned wildlife resource values, the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park provide exceptional hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing opportunities, as well as access to adjacent roadless areas and the Proposed Great Burn Wilderness.

### **4.3 Vegetation**

Plant community distribution within the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park is primarily dependent on elevation, aspect, moisture regimes and fire history. Elevation throughout the Fish Creek Project area varies from approximately 3,150 feet along the main stem of Fish Creek, to 6,110 feet at the headwaters of Wig Creek in the southeastern portion of the property. Large-scale fire events in 1910, 1917, 2003, and 2005, as well as subsequent, intensive logging shaped the vegetation patterns and habitat types. In those locations, re-vegetation of timber has been limited, but shrubs, forbs, and grasses are re-establishing the landscape. Past commercial logging activities throughout the property have left a mosaic pattern of timber regeneration.

Lower montane and foothill forest comprise approximately 22,000 acres of the property and are dominated by mesic (Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, western larch) and dry-mesic (Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine) mixed conifer forest types. Lowland grassland and shrubs cover 7,683 acres of the Project area and include bluebunch wheatgrass, ninebark, and snowberry.

Cool and moist, to moderately dry subalpine habitat types dominate the upper elevations of many of the tributaries. Common conifers in these areas include lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and Douglas-fir.

Within the riparian areas, western red cedar habitat types occupy warm and moist sites in drainages on the west side of Fish Creek that have not been exposed and compromised by extensive timber harvest. Seral black cottonwood-ponderosa pine communities occur along Fish Creek and in some of the side drainages on the east side of the main stem.

The presence of noxious weed species pervades along both active and abandoned roadways, and all other sites that have been disturbed by human activities. Exotic weed species include spotted knapweed, St. Johnswort, sulphur cinquefoil, and cheatgrass. In lesser quantities, there is dalmatian toadflax, leafy spurge, common hound's-tongue and meadow hawkweed.

### **4.4 Heritage Resources**

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) completed a cultural resource file search for the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park properties and reported the existence of a few previously recorded sites. Most of the sites are associated with

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

the historic Mullan Road, Milwaukee Railroad and stage services along the Clark Fork River corridor.

Additionally, an unstaffed fire lookout tower originally established in 1934 and subsequently replaced with the existing tower in 1977, is present on Williams Peak. The specific type and extent of additional cultural resources and artifacts are unknown at present, but it is highly likely that the property has a rich assemblage of cultural resources.

### **4.5 Geological Resources**

There is a strong possibility that the property contains geological resources of scientific and educational importance. MFWP would locate, identify and interpret these resources.

### **4.6 Recreation Resources**

MFWP has long valued the landscape comprised of the proposed Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park as a regionally important destination for hunting and fishing. The adjoining Alberton Gorge Recreation Area draws visitors from across the Northern Rockies and Inland Northwest to pursue whitewater boating. In addition, Fish Creek and the Gorge currently offer a limited amount of developed and primitive camping, wildlife viewing, sightseeing and motorized use on open routes.

Property assets for expanded recreation include the Williams Peak fire lookout, which could be managed as an overnight rental. An extensive road prism provides the option of trail development on or connecting existing closed roads. Suitable sites exist to support new developed campgrounds.

### **4.7 Aesthetic Resources**

The site provides a strong sense of place with many aesthetic values important to the spiritual and mental health, welfare and morale of Montanans and their visitors. Specific attributes include but are not limited to the beauty of the Clark Fork River and its tributaries, open space, wildlife, scenic viewsheds, natural quiet, clean air and historic landscape.

### **4.8 Neighboring Properties**

The property borders the Lolo National Forest (~ 140,000 acres), Department of Natural Resources Conservation lands (~ 6,000 acres), and some private lands (< 2% of the drainage). MFWP will work with neighbors and the communities near the property to keep undesirable effects to a minimum and to enhance positive benefits to all.

## **PART 5.0 – NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Management**

Desired Conditions: To maintain and improve native fish populations, aquatic habitat, and quality recreational fishing for current and future generations.

Management Strategies:

- a) Protect and enhance bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout and other native aquatic populations
  - Continue monitoring fish relative abundance, genetic composition, and aquatic species distribution in the main stem and tributaries.
  - Evaluate effectiveness of fishing regulations in protecting native trout.
  - Ensure connectivity among aquatic populations.
  - Evaluate impacts and management options for nonnative fish.
- b) Implement watershed restoration projects to mitigate large-scale habitat degradation, improve water quality, promote natural stream integrity, and facilitate connectivity of aquatic habitats
  - Protect and restore riparian corridors.
  - Correct unnatural impediments to fish movement.
  - Remove or repair sub-standard stream crossings.
  - Identify and evaluate opportunities to stabilize and revegetate closed roads.
  - Protect instream flows.
  - Identify and evaluate opportunities for instream habitat enhancement.
- c) Maintain and enhance fishery quality on lower Fish Creek
  - Evaluate effectiveness of fishing regulations.
  - Monitor whirling disease as necessary.
  - Enhance westslope cutthroat trout contribution to fishery.

### **5.2 Wildlife Management**

Desired Conditions: MFWP would maintain and enhance habitat to sustain healthy wildlife populations for the use and enjoyment by the public for current and future generations. This would include managing for maximum, sustainable utilization of winter range by elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose. A major area of emphasis would be to maintain landscape connectivity and enhance habitats for wide-ranging and sensitive species.

Management Strategies:

- a.) During the first two years of ownership, MFWP would conduct a Wildlife Assessment of the subject property. This includes the following:



## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

- Continuing with current trend surveys, including aerial trend surveys for elk and spring recruitment ground surveys for white-tailed deer.
- Establishing and conducting additional trend surveys for big game, furbearers, upland game birds, and non-game species, including:
  - Ground surveys for upland game birds.
  - Snow track surveys for furbearers following the State's track survey protocol.
  - Conducting beaver cache counts.
  - Implementing raptor surveys.
  - Implementing songbird counts, and possibly banding operations.
  - Implementing bat surveys.
  - Implementing small mammal surveys.
  - Surveying riparian and wetland areas for breeding amphibians.
  - Conducting targeted surveys for Species of Concern and Tier 1 species that are not easily detected by standard multi-species survey efforts.

b.) Providing intact, high quality, secure winter range is important for wintering elk and deer. Recreational activities and other human disturbance during the winter and spring displace elk and other wildlife (Naylor et al., 2009; Joslin et. al., 1999), resulting in an expenditure of energy that can affect survival, especially for young of the year. Nutritional deficiencies during the winter and spring result in cow elk losing weight, subsequently decreasing the odds of fetal survival, as well as normal calf birth weight, growth, and survival (Raithel et. al., 2005). Accordingly, management of human disturbance during the critical winter period is an important component of securing winter range for wildlife and is discussed in more detail in Section 7.1.

Habitat Montana and Pittman Robertson funding stipulations require that wildlife be the number one priority for the purchase and management of the WMA. For the first 3-years, MFWP would close the area delineated in Appendix F from December 1<sup>st</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> to all public access to provide security for wintering wildlife. (The boundary is contingent on a cooperative agreement with DNRC.) During the interim 36-months, FWP would further evaluate the need for any additional winter area-closures to enhance big game winter range, and would incorporate these (with the benefit of public involvement) within the final management plan. Motorized travel would be restricted to the open-road system (Appendix E) to limit human disturbance.

- c.) Over the next 3-years, MFWP's objective is to increase elk and deer populations in Fish and Nemote creeks, while continuing with current hunting opportunity on the subject property. Strategies to increase these populations include the following:
- Maintain and enhance open grasslands and shrubfields.
  - Contain and control noxious weeds.

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

- Provide secure areas for wildlife with no human disturbance from December 1<sup>st</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> annually (See Appendix F).
- Continue with mountain lion hunting on the subject property, except within the closed area delineated in Appendix F.
- Recommend hunting season regulations that balance predator and prey relationships.

### LITERATURE CITED

Joslin, G., and H. Youmans, Coordinators. 1999. Effects of recreation on Rocky Mountain wildlife: A Review for Montana. Committee on Effects of Recreation on Wildlife, Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society. 307pp.

Naylor, Leslie M., Michael J. Wisdom and Robert G. Anthony. 2009. Behavioral responses of North American Elk to Recreational Activity, *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 73(3), Pgs. 328-338.

Raithel, J.D. (2005). Impact of Calf Survival on Elk Population Dynamics in West-Central Montana. Thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana. 105pp.

### **5.3 Vegetation Management**

Desired Conditions: Vegetation would be managed to maintain and enhance open grasslands and shrubfields to produce forage for elk and deer on south-facing winter ranges, and to allow natural forest succession to advance on burned and logged north-facing slopes. Forested stands generally would be multistoried, with a goal of recruiting large trees and snags. Riparian habitats would be managed to maintain and enhance native plant composition for the benefit of terrestrial and aquatic species.

#### Management Strategies:

- a) Within the 3-year lifespan of the Preliminary Management Plan, MFWP would begin working on a vegetation management plan that would entail surveying and mapping habitat types on the subject property. The process would include ground-truthing the GIS ReGAP habitat layer and utilizing GIS to analyze canopy cover, slope, elevation, and soil composition.
- b) Forest management during the interim 3-year period would not include timber harvesting.
- c) Extensive logging in the burned areas of the subject property infringed upon portions of riparian habitat in Deer Creek, Thompson Creek and the South Fork of Fish Creek. MFWP would consider enhancing these riparian areas by revegetating with native trees and shrubs, and reseeding with native grasses and forbs.

### **5.4 Noxious Weed Management**

Desired Conditions: To keep noxious weeds contained and controlled to prevent loss of native species and subsequent declines in plant community productivity.

Management Strategies:

- a) Implement chemical, biological and mechanical control measures in keeping with the MFWP Statewide Weed Management Plan. In calendar year 2010, FWP would budget \$50,000 for the direct control of noxious weeds on the WMA, focusing first on chemical control along roadsides and other primary travel corridors. A containment strategy for weed occurrences in the uplands would be further ground-truthed and implementation begun, also in 2010.
- b) Identify and map all noxious weeds on the subject lands in MFWP's first 36 months of ownership.
- c) Coordinate routinely with the Mineral County weed district.
- d) Work with neighboring landowners on control efforts across property boundaries.

## **PART 6.0 – HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Heritage Resource Protection**

Desired Conditions: Heritage resources would be protected and interpreted as an integral part of the Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park landscape.

Management Strategies:

- a) Conduct a compliance level inventory of heritage resources located on the property.
- b) Consult with the State Historic Preservation office for all undertakings with potential to disturb heritage resources.
- c) Educate the public about the importance of leaving heritage resources for future generations.
- d) Interpret cultural resources through sensitive and appropriate displays, programs and information.

## **PART 7.0 – RECREATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **7.1 Public Access**

Desired Conditions: Public access via motorized and non-motorized means will be provided at appropriate and strategic locations with a system of existing roads maintained as open to motorized travel for delivering recreationists to points of departure for fishing, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and other recreation. The Park would potentially serve as the hub for any expanded forms of motorized or non-motorized recreation, including an equestrian campground. On the WMA and in the Park, public access would be fostered in late spring, summer and fall, and not encouraged or promoted in winter to protect wintering wildlife.

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

### Management Strategies:

- a) Conduct an inventory and assessment of existing roads, condition, and maintenance needs and costs.
- b) Begin the process (with public involvement) of designing a public access plan that supports an array of recreational opportunities consistent with fish, wildlife and recreation management objectives.
- c) In the interim 36 months, restrict motorized travel to open routes as depicted in Appendix E, and to parking areas and developed recreation sites.
- d) Provide secure areas for wildlife with no human disturbance from December 1<sup>st</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> annually (See Appendix F).
- e) Delineate property boundaries as necessary and as funds become available.

## **7.2 Public Use Regulations**

Desired Conditions: Public use regulations would be established, posted and enforced in a manner that protects public safety and prevents damage or degradation to natural, cultural or recreational resources.

### Management Strategies:

- a) Public use would be regulated according to existing ARM Rules pertinent to Wildlife Management Areas and State Parks.
- b) Discharge of firearms and weapons will be restricted to lawful hunting only within the State Park. Recreational shooting will be prohibited within the State Park (ARM 12.8.202).
- c) Pets must be under the control of their owner (ARM 12.8.203).
- d) Recreational livestock such as pack and saddle animals will be restricted to designated trails and areas only on the State Park. Horse riders must accompany horses at all times. Horse grazing will be prohibited. Weed seed-free feed required (ARM 12.8.203).
- e) Restrict motorized travel to open roads (Appendix E), parking areas, and developed recreation sites (ARM 12.8.204).
- f) Camping will only be permitted in designated sites and/or areas. (ARM 12.8.205).
- g) Campfires will only be permitted in designated locations (ARM 12.8.206).
- h) Gathering or cutting firewood for off-site use will be prohibited. (ARM 12.8.207)
- i) Removal of natural, geological, historical or archeological property will be prohibited except for flowers, berries, cones, fallen dead wood or lawfully taken fish and game (ARM 12.8.207).
- j) Commercial use will require a permit in accordance with the Statewide Commercial Use Rules (ARM 12.14.101-170). No commercial hunting or angling outfitting is permitted on the WMA.
- k) Permits are required for groups of over 30 people (ARM 12.8.205).

### 7.3 Marketing

Desired Conditions: The site would be promoted as a unique public resource and integral part of Montana's Wildlife Management Area and State Park systems.

Management Strategies:

- a) MFWP would begin the process (with public involvement) of developing a marketing plan appropriate to the opportunities and facilities afforded in the final management plan.
- b) In the interim, FWP would post site information on existing FWP websites and update brochures.

### 7.4 Camping

Desired Conditions: Overnight camping opportunities would be available in both front-country and backcountry recreational settings where appropriate.

Management Strategies: Begin developing (with public involvement) a final management plan, which would provide for the following:

- a) An appropriate number and distribution of front-country and backcountry campsites and/or areas.
- b) A vehicle accessible front-country fee campground in the northern portion of the Fish Creek drainage.
- c) A vehicle accessible front-country fee equestrian campground near the confluence area of the South and West Forks of Fish Creek.

In the interim 36 months, camping would continue to be provided at Forks and Big Pine fishing access sites. Additional camping opportunities would be evaluated based upon compatibility with natural resource values. Pioneered sites that are incompatible with natural resource values (such as, but not limited to, stream banks and riparian vegetation) could be closed to camping to avoid further damage.

### 7.5 Williams Peak Lookout

Desired Conditions: The Williams Peak Lookout would be a safe and unique overnight rental experience.

Management Strategies:

- a) Assess the structural stability of the tower and cab, as well as the feasibility of addressing any potential structural shortcomings.
- b) Complete any required maintenance of the tower and cab to ensure public safety and a high quality recreation experience.
- c) Develop and implement a program to provide the lookout as an overnight rental opportunity.

## 7.6 River Recreation

Desired Conditions: Outstanding opportunities for floating on the Alberton Gorge section of the Clark Fork River would be available to the public.

Management Strategies:

- a) Continue the existing Alberton Gorge river recreation management program.
- b) Consider this Preliminary Management Plan and the MOU (Appendix B) when developing a specific river recreation program implementation plan, including identification of a river recreation carrying capacity and establishment of indicators and standards for high quality social and resource conditions related to river recreation.

## 7.7 Trails

Desired Conditions: Trail systems would be developed for public use if suitable locations and trail alignments can be found that do not adversely impact soils, natural features, wildlife, fisheries and cultural resources.

Management Strategies:

- a) Begin developing, with public involvement and with consideration of the MOU (Appendix B), plans for a trail system. Thereafter, develop and implement trail maintenance and signing standards.
  - Evaluate potential trail locations, alignments, routes and use designations.
  - Evaluate the options/potential for a hut-to-hut/ yurt-to-yurt system.
- b) In the interim 36 months of this Preliminary Management Plan, allow yearlong non-motorized access on existing open roads, closed roads, and trails with the exception of the winter closure on the WMA (See Appendix F).
- c) In the interim 36 months, restrict motorized travel to open routes as depicted in Appendix E, and to parking areas and developed recreation sites.

## 7.8 Hunting

Desired Conditions: Opportunities for hunting will continue to be available to the public in accordance with existing hunting districts and regulations and those regulations adopted in the future.

Management Strategies:

- a) Manage hunting in accordance with current districts and regulations.
- b) Within the State Park, implement a hunting access system that allows MFWP to monitor and regulate hunting activity and establish conditions that allow hunters and non-hunters to safely share recreational resources.

## 7.9 Angling

Desired Conditions: Opportunities for angling would be available in accordance with existing creel limits and fishing regulations.

Management Strategies:

- a) Manage fishing in accordance with current creel limits and fishing regulations.
- b) Promote appropriate fishing etiquette and catch and release techniques.
- c) Facilitate access to fishing waters where appropriate.

## 7.10 Education and Interpretation

Desired Conditions: Educational and interpretive media and services would be developed to tell the story of the area's natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Management Strategies:

- a) Develop appropriate educational and interpretive themes consistent with the areas values and resources.
- b) Install a standard State Park informational kiosk at primary entrances to the site.
- c) Begin developing a final management plan, which could include the following:
  - On-site park naturalist interpretive hikes and programs.
  - Detailed information regarding the area's natural, cultural, geological and recreational resources on the FWP homepage.
- d) Explore social media opportunities such as Facebook and Twitter, to communicate with the public.

## 7.11 Commercial Use

Desired Conditions: Commercial use would be approved if compatible with existing FWP policies, rules or regulations and deemed a necessary and appropriate service for the public.

Management Strategies:

- a) Develop a commercial use plan with criteria for evaluating commercial use requests.
- b) Permit approved commercial use requests in accordance with the FWP Commercial Use Rule and Commercial Use Fee Rule (ARM 12.14.101-170).
- c) No commercial hunting or angling outfitting is permitted on the WMA (ARM 12.14.115).

## 7.12 Public Safety

Desired Conditions: The Fish Creek WMA and Fish Creek State Park encompass substantial acreages of wild and primitive lands, which FWP generally strives to protect and maintain in its native condition. Visitors will be required to prepare as they would to

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

enjoy most recreational experiences on most Forest Service or other public lands in Montana.

### Management Strategies:

- a) For areas of high and concentrated public use in the State Park, such as the equestrian campground, develop and provide the following:
  - An Emergency Operations and Response Plan that promotes a proactive approach to public safety.
  - An adequate law enforcement patrol and response presence on the site through the use of Game Wardens and Ex-officio Wardens.
  - Appropriate information, regulatory postings, and educational messages related to public safety.

## **PART 8.0 – ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE**

Desired Conditions: Funding and staffing would be secured to properly support site administration, operations, maintenance and stewardship.

### Management Strategies:

- a) Develop a strategy to provide an interim site presence capable of providing basic site stewardship while funding and FTE to administer the site are being pursued.
- b) Pursue long-term operations funding and FTE for a Park site manager and park ranger to provide adequate site stewardship, administration and visitor use management.

## **PART 9.0 – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Desired Conditions: MFWP would strive to secure capital funding for public facilities and amenities that enhance the visitor experience in the State Park. No capital improvements are anticipated on the WMA during the lifespan of the Preliminary Management Plan.

### Management Strategies:

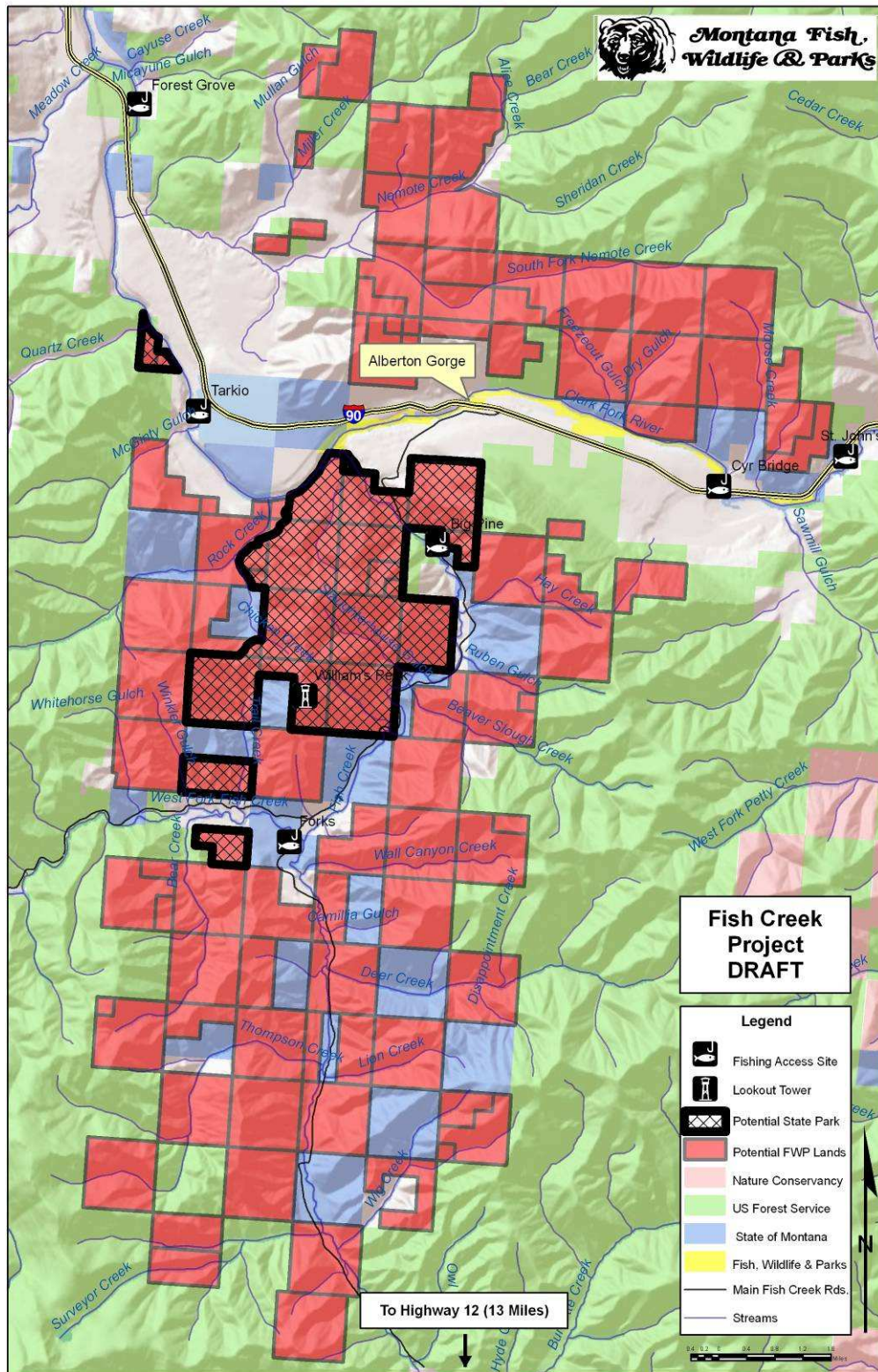
- a) With public involvement, begin developing a final management plan, which will include the following:
  - A concept plan for proposed park facilities, including access roads parking areas, signs exhibits, comfort stations, front country campsites and/or areas, backcountry campsites and/or areas, developed campground, equestrian campground, trails, yurt/hut locations, and primary visitor contact station.
  - Priorities for the phased development of facilities and amenities.



## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

- b) FWP would implement a Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) compliance process for all major actions including ground disturbing construction or capital improvement projects.

## APPENDIX A – MAP OF FISH CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA AND FISH CREEK STATE PARK



**APPENDIX B – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)  
BETWEEN THE FISH & WILDLIFE DIVISION AND PARKS DIVISION  
FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE FISH CREEK  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA AND STATE PARK**

**Multiple Resource Values**

The Fish Creek Project includes 40,945 acres of important upland and riparian habitats with high wildlife, fisheries and recreation resource values. Broken into individual program areas, those values include the following:

***Wildlife***

- Fish Creek is a very high priority forest carnivore linkage zone, providing habitat connectivity between the Ninemile Divide and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (American Wildlands, 2009; Servheen et. al., 2003).
- The drainage provides crucial winter range and other seasonal habitats for elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer and moose. It also supports diverse populations of predators, furbearers and upland game birds, including black bear, mountain lion, wolf, beaver, fisher, pine marten, mountain grouse and turkey.
- There are 32 terrestrial vertebrate species of concern that have been verified or are potentially found within the Fish Creek Project area, with 12 of those identified as Tier 1 species (Montana Natural Heritage Program, 2009; MFWP, 2005). Also, there are 6 potential species of concern (including one Tier 1 species), and 1 additional Tier 1 species, which was recently removed from the SOC list.
- Within the drainage, there are exceptional hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities, as well as access to adjacent roadless and proposed wilderness areas.
- Additional wildlife enhancement opportunities include translocating bighorn sheep to the drainage.

***Fisheries***

- Fish Creek and its tributaries supports the strongest runs of bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout within the 120-mile reach of the Middle Clark Fork watershed, with many of its streams also supporting genetically pure, resident westslope cutthroat trout.
- The Middle Clark Fork River is an Aquatic Focus Area for MFWP (MFWP, 2005).
- The Fish Creek drainage is an aquatic restoration priority – past and ongoing.
- It is an outstanding fishery and major source of recruitment for the Clark Fork River fishery.
- Fish Creek averages about 2,000 angler days annually.

### ***Recreation***

- The Fish Creek Project includes priority acquisition parcels within and adjacent to the Alberton Gorge (MFWP, 2007).
- The mouth of Fish Creek is an essential component of the Alberton Gorge float experience.
- Fish Creek is heavily used area for camping, sightseeing, hunting, wildlife viewing, angling, and OHV use.
- MFWP currently manages two fishing access sites (FAS) in the drainage. These FASs (Big Pine and Forks) each have five campsites.
- Additional recreational opportunities could include development of a trail system(s), a developed campground (50-75 sites), Williams Peak lookout rental, and a developed equestrian campground (~25 sites).

### **Proposed Acquisition and Management Boundaries**

Regional staff from each program area have worked collaboratively to propose Potential Wildlife Management Area and Potential State Park boundaries (See Map). This effort has focused on inventorying and mapping resource values in order to prioritize lands for acquisition. The process also identified areas where there are overlapping land acquisition priorities based upon the existence of overlapping resource values.

Overlapping land acquisition priorities occur in the northern portion of the Fish Creek drainage and are focused primarily on conflicting wildlife and recreation resource values. Numerous studies and reports have shown that recreational activities and development can negatively affect wildlife (Naylor et; al., 2009; Joslin and Youmans, 1999). However, thorough discussions regarding placement of management boundaries and implementation of management strategies can avoid or mitigate negative impacts.

Most of the proposed 6,864 acre Potential State Park boundary follows existing property lines, with the exception of the western boundary. This boundary, which includes road 341, was delineated to address recreation management concerns and avoid or mitigate potential wildlife impacts.

### **Strategies to Address Concerns of Overlapping Wildlife, Fisheries & Recreation Resource Values**

The following list identifies management concerns related to overlapping acquisition priorities and proposed management strategies to avoid negative wildlife and fisheries impacts, while providing for recreational opportunities and a natural view-shed. MFWP could implement the following strategies to address these concerns.

1. Wildlife Linkage Zone from Rock Creek to Tarkio
  - a. As one of the highest priorities for protection in the Fish Creek Project, the most intact portion of the identified linkage zone should be included within the WMA.
  - b. MFWP should close the cutoff road (unnamed) between Rock Creek (USFS Road 7764) and Chicken Creek (Road 341).

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

- c. Dispersed camping should not be permitted within the linkage zone along the Clark Fork River and at its confluence with Rock Creek.
  - d. Dispersed camping should not be permitted within the riparian areas of Rock Creek.
  - e. MFWP should continue the existing management approach of a natural view-shed within the Alberton Gorge to enhance both wildlife and recreation resource values.
2. Riparian Habitat and the Wildlife Movement Corridor from the Confluence of Fish Creek and the Clark Fork River to Forks FAS
- a. MFWP should continue to manage the mouth of Fish Creek as a “day-use only” site.
  - b. MFWP should protect riparian habitat by implementing the following:
    - i. Avoiding recreation site development between the mouth of Fish Creek and Big Pine FAS. (Note: the canyon-like nature of the creek in much of this stretch does not present likely development opportunities. In addition, the majority of the lands along Fish Creek are owned by private landowners and the DNRC.)
    - ii. Pursuing proactive Leave No Trace information and education campaigns that emphasize minimizing riparian habitat degradation and wildlife impacts. Interpretive signs may be used to help develop these educational opportunities.
    - iii. Pursuing proactive information and education campaigns, including using kiosks that are aimed at the importance of riparian habitat and associated buffers to protect and enhance wildlife, fisheries and recreation resource values.
    - iv. Discouraging dispersed camping within the riparian areas of Fish Creek, particularly between the confluence of the Clark Fork River and Fish Creek to the Forks FAS.
  - c. MFWP should continue to coordinate with landowners along Fish Creek to improve the wildlife, fisheries and recreation resource values.
3. State Park Campground Development and Big Game Winter Range
- a. In Township 14N, Range 24W, Section 6, MFWP could establish a developed campground, which should be located and managed in a way that allows for continued intact winter range and protection of riparian habitat along Fish Creek and the Clark Fork River. (Note: the canyon-like nature of the creek in much of this stretch does not present likely development opportunities.)
  - b. MFWP should install and maintain bear-resistant food and garbage containers within the developed campground.
  - c. MFWP will coordinate appropriate campground schedules of operation for compatible wildlife needs. This coordination would occur between the Parks Division and Wildlife Division as needed.

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

### 4. Dispersed Camping Along WMA/State Park Boundaries

- a. Dispersed camping should not be permitted within the linkage zone along the Clark Fork River and at its confluence with Rock Creek. Also, dispersed camping should not be permitted within the riparian areas of Rock Creek.
- b. MFWP should define buffers along WMA/State Park boundaries where dispersed camping is not permitted.

### 5. Equestrian Campground Development

- a. In Township 14N, Range 25W, Section 35, MFWP could establish a developed equestrian campground. This campground would provide facilities and trail access catering specifically to visitors with horses.
- b. Stock users should be required to use weed-free hay and feed.
- c. Commercial use should be in compliance with MFWP commercial use rules and funding requirements.
- d. MFWP should install and maintain bear-resistant garbage and feed storage containers.

### 6. Trail System Development within the State Park and Portions of the WMA

- a. MFWP should coordinate planning and development of trail systems to enhance compatibility of trail opportunities and wildlife needs.
- b. MFWP should base trail use designations on the compatibility of use with resource values.
- c. MFWP could establish a non-motorized trail yurt/hut system. On the WMA, yurt/hut establishment would be in compliance with funding requirements and compatible with fish and wildlife management objectives.
- d. On WMA properties, trail systems, as opposed to open road systems, will be limited to non-motorized travel in compliance with funding requirements and agency guidance and secondly, consistent with emphasizing stock use associated with the equestrian campground.
- e. OHV trail use occurring on the State Park unit could tie into open-roads on the WMA.

### 7. Cultural and Historic Resources

- a. Wildlife and Parks staff should coordinate their efforts to preserve the cultural and historic resources (e.g., Mullan Trail).

### 8. Hunting Opportunities in the State Park and the WMA

- a. Developed State Park campgrounds should remain open each year to accommodate hunters and other fall recreationists.
- b. Hunting should be permitted within the State Park, with safety zones established around developed recreation areas such as campgrounds and the Williams Peak Lookout.
- c. Hunting should be permitted on the WMA.

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

### 9. Enhance Existing Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

- a. Wildlife and Parks staff should coordinate their efforts to enhance current and future wildlife viewing opportunities, including translocating bighorn sheep into HDs 201 and 202.

### 10. Road Management

- a. Road management should consider aquatic values and impacts such as sediment delivery, riparian encroachment and failure risks/fish passage at road crossings. Management includes road use, road restrictions and road storage or decommissioning.

Future recreational development within the State Park or the WMA will go through the appropriate public involvement process.

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## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

### APPENDIX C – Fish Creek Vertebrate Species List (verified and potential species)

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
Coeur d'Alene Salamander	<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>	SOC	Populations verified in Woodman Creek to east, and Trout Creek to west, some suitable habitat in area
Long-toed Salamander	<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>		
Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog	<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>		
Western Toad	<i>Bufo boreas</i>	SOC	
Columbia Spotted Frog	<i>Rana luteiventris</i>		
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	SOC	
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		Clark Fork River
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		
Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	SOC	Nesting confirmed south of area in Fish Creek, below Cache Cr.
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		Clark Fork River
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>		Observed 5 miles west of area in similar habitats
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		Nests along Clark Fork River
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	SOC	Nests along Clark Fork River
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>		Observed 5 miles west of area in similar habitats
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>		Observed 5 miles west of area in similar habitats
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	SOC	Nesting records on nearby FS lands
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>		
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	SOC	Observed on FS lands 10 miles to north, likely to be found in area
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>		
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	SOC	Nests along Clark Fork River in cliffs
Spruce Grouse	<i>Falcipennis canadensis</i>		Observed near Schley Mountain west of area
Dusky (Blue) Grouse	<i>Dendragapus obscurus</i>		Observed on FS lands 4 miles west of area
Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>		
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>		
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>		Fish Creek BBS route
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>		Fish Creek BBS Route
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>		
Flammulated Owl	<i>Otus flammeolus</i>	SOC	Detected on flammulated owl survey route at western edge of area
Western Screech-owl	<i>Megascops kennicottii</i>	PSOC	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>		



## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
Northern Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>		Observed on FS lands nearby
Great Gray Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Barred Owl	<i>Strix varia</i>		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	<i>Aegolius acadicus</i>		Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>		
Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>		
Calliope Hummingbird	<i>Stellula calliope</i>		
Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>		
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>		
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Williamson's Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>		
Red-naped Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>		
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>		
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>		
Black-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides arcticus</i>	SOC	Nesting confirmed in Fish Creek burn
American Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>		1 detected on Fish Creek BBS route in 2002
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>		
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	SOC	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>		Recently removed from SOC list
Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>		2 detected on Fish Creek BBS route
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>		
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>		Fish Creek BBS route
Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondi</i>		
Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>		
Cordilleran Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax occidentalis</i>		N.F. Fish Creek on FS lands
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>		
Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>		
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>		
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>		Private lands adjacent to area
Gray Jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>		
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>		
Clark's Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>	SOC	
Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>		
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>		
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>		
Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>		
Boreal Chickadee	<i>Poecile hudsonica</i>	SOC	Limited suitable habitat, not verified

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>		
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>		
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	SOC	FS lands 2 miles from area
Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>		
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>		
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	SOC	
American Dipper	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>		Nesting confirmed in Cache Creek south of area
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>		
Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>		Observations in Fish Creek pending approval by MNHP
Mountain Bluebird	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>		
Townsend's Solitaire	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>		
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	SOC	Verified in area
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>		
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>		
Varied Thrush	<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>		
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>		
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>		
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>		
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>		
Cassin's Vireo	<i>Vireo cassinii</i>		
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrine</i>	PSOC	Possibly suitable habitat in area, not verified
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>		
Nashville Warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>		
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>		
Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>		
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>		Fish Creek BBS Route
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>		
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>		
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>		
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>		
Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>		
Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>		
Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>		
Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>		
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>		

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>		Found in grasslands adjacent to area
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>		Found in grasslands adjacent to area
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>		
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>		
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>		
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>		
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>		Found in grasslands adjacent to area
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>		
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Cassin's Finch	<i>Carpodacus cassinii</i>	SOC	Verified in area
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>		
Pine Siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>		
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>		
Westslope Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi</i>	SOC	
Rainbow Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>		
Mountain Whitefish	<i>Prosopium williamsoni</i>		
Brown Trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>		
Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	SOC	
Brook Trout	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>		
Northern Pikeminnow	<i>Ptychocheilus oregonensis</i>		
Longnose Dace	<i>Rhinichthys cataractae</i>		
Redside Shiner	<i>Richardsonius balteatus</i>		
Largescale Sucker	<i>Catostomus macrocheilus</i>		
Masked Shrew	<i>Sorex cinereus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Vagrant Shrew	<i>Sorex vagrans</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Dusky or Montane Shrew	<i>Sorex monticolus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Water Shrew	<i>Sorex palustris</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Little Brown Myotis	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Long-eared Myotis	<i>Myotis evotis</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Fringed Myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat, not verified
Long-legged Myotis	<i>Myotis volans</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
California Myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Western Small-footed Myotis	<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Silver-haired Bat	<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>	PSOC	Suitable habitat, not verified
Big Brown Bat	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Hoary Bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat, not verified
Spotted Bat	<i>Euderma maculata</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat, not verified
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	SOC	Suitable foraging habitat, not verified
Pika	<i>Ochotona princeps</i>		Observed near area, not verified

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
Mountain Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus nuttallii</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Snowshoe Hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>		
Yellow-pine Chipmunk	<i>Tamias amoenus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Red-tailed Chipmunk	<i>Tamias ruficaudus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Yellow-bellied Marmot	<i>Marmota flaviventris</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Hoary Marmot	<i>Marmota caligata</i>	SOC	Possible suitable habitat in SW corner of area, not verified
Columbian Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus columbianus</i>		
Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus lateralis</i>		
Red Squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>		
Northern Flying Squirrel	<i>Glaucomys sabrinus</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Northern Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys idahoensis</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
American Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>		
Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>		
Bushy-tailed Woodrat	<i>Neotoma cinerea</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Southern Red-backed Vole	<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>		
Heather Vole	<i>Phenacomys intermedius</i>		
Meadow Vole	<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>		
Montane Vole	<i>Microtus montanus</i>		
Long-tailed Vole	<i>Microtus longicaudus</i>		
Water Vole	<i>Microtus richardsoni</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Western Jumping Mouse	<i>Zapus princeps</i>		Suitable habitat, not verified
Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>		
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>		
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	SOC	
Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>		
Brown (Grizzly) Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat for re-occupation as population expands
American Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>		
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>	SOC	
Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>		
Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>		
North American Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>	SOC	
Northern River Otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>		
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	SOC	
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>		
Mountain Lion	<i>Puma concolor</i>		
Elk or Wapiti	<i>Cervus canadensis</i>		
Mule Deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>		

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

Common Name	Scientific Name	SOC	Comments
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>		
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>		
Mountain Goat	<i>Oreamnos americanus</i>		
Bighorn Sheep	<i>Ovis canadensis</i>		
Northern Alligator Lizard	<i>Elgaria coerulea</i>	SOC	Verified along Clark Fork River
Western Skink	<i>Eumeces skiltonianus</i>	SOC	Suitable habitat, not verified
Rubber Boa	<i>Charina bottae</i>		
Terrestrial Gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>		
Common Gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>		

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

### **APPENDIX D - The table below lists the Species of Concern with CFWCS Tier1 noted in blue that are predicted to occur within or in the vicinity of the property.**

Species	Status	Habitat	Status in Fish Creek & Vicinity
<b><u>Species of Concern</u></b>			
Bull Trout	Threatened	Coldwater streams	Verified
Westslope Cutthroat Trout	SOC	Coldwater Streams	Verified in area - abundant
Canada Lynx	Threatened	Subalpine conifer forests	Verified
Fisher	SOC	Mixed conifer forests	Verified
Fringed Myotis	SOC	Riparian & dry mixed conifer forests	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Gray Wolf	Delisted, SOC	Generalist	Verified
Grizzly Bear	Threatened	Generalist	Suitable habitat for expansion into the area
Hoary Bat	SOC	Riparian and forest habitats	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Spotted Bat	SOC	Arid land rock outcrops	Suitable habitat present along Clark Fork River
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	SOC	Caves and mines	Suitable roost sites possible in or near area, foraging habitat present
Wolverine	SOC	Conifer forests	Verified
Bald Eagle	Delisted, SOC	Riparian forests	Verified. Nesting pair along Clark Fork. Possible nesting pair up Fish Creek.
Black-backed Woodpecker	SOC	Burned conifer forests	Verified near the area, suitable habitat (recent burns) within area
Boreal Chickadee	SOC	Spruce fir forests	Limited suitable habitat, not verified
Brown Creeper	SOC	Mixed conifer forests	Verified on forest service lands around the area, suitable habitat
Cassin's Finch	SOC	Conifer forests	Verified in the area
Clark's Nutcracker	SOC	Conifer forests	Verified in the area
Flammulated Owl	SOC	Low-mid elevation conifer forests with large trees	Verified in the area
Golden Eagle	SOC	Generalist	Suitable habitat in the area, not verified
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	SOC	Alpine	Limited suitable habitat may be present, needs evaluation
Great Blue Heron	SOC	Riparian woodlands	Verified in area
Great Gray Owl	SOC	Conifer forests	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Harlequin Duck	SOC	Mountain Streams	Verified in South Fork Fish Creek south of area, limited suitable habitat present in the area
Lewis's Woodpecker	SOC	Riparian forests	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Northern Goshawk	SOC	Mixed conifer forests	Verified near the area, suitable habitat present
Peregrine Falcon	Delisted,	Cliffs near riparian or wetland	Verified in area, nest site along

## DRAFT Preliminary Management Plan

	SOC	habitat	Clark Fork River
Pileated Woodpecker	SOC	Conifer forests with large trees	Verified in area
Veery	SOC	Riparian forests/shrubby habitats	Verified in area
Winter Wren	SOC	Conifer/riparian forests	Verified in area
Northern Alligator Lizard	SOC	Talus/rock outcrops	Verified near area, suitable habitat present
Western Skink	SOC	Open conifer forests/grasslands	Verified near Alberton and Superior, suitable habitat present
Coeur d'Alene Salamander	SOC	Spring/seep, waterfalls, mossy talus	Populations verified in Woodman Creek to east, and Trout Creek to west, some suitable habitat in area
Western Toad	SOC	Wetlands, lakes, floodplain ponds	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Magnum Mantleslug ( <i>Magnipelta mycophaga</i> )	SOC	Moist conifer forests	Verified in W. Fork Petty Creek, suitable habitat in area
Rocky Mountain Dusksnail ( <i>Colligyrus greggi</i> )	SOC	Cold freshwater streams and springs	A few populations nearby, not verified in area
Western Pearlshell	SOC	Coldwater streams	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Clustered Lady's-Slipper ( <i>Cypripedium fasciculatum</i> )	SOC	Montana occurrences are mostly in warm, dry mid-seral montane forest in the Douglas fir/ninebark and grand fir/ninebark habitat types. Elsewhere in its range, it is in western red cedar habitat types.	Verified just west of area in 2000 survey. Timber harvesting has been the primary threat to the species in Montana.
Kelloggia ( <i>Kelloggia galioides</i> )	SOC	Open forest in the valley and montane zones	Known in Montana from one 1971 collection in the South Fork Fish Creek valley
Northern Twayblade ( <i>Listera borealis</i> )	SOC	Grows in seepy, marshy places along cold-air drainages, often where calcareous	Collected in 1971 in area
Western Joepyeweed ( <i>Eupatorium occidentale</i> )	SOC	Rocky outcrops and slopes in the montane and lower subalpine zones	Herbarium specimen from 1975
<b>Potential Species of Concern</b>			
Hoary Marmot	PSOC	Alpine/subalpine meadows/rock outcrops	Limited suitable habitat in SW corner of area, not verified
Silver-haired Bat	PSOC	Riparian and forest habitats	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Hooded Merganser	PSOC	Riparian forests	Limited suitable habitat in area, not verified
Rufous Hummingbird	PSOC	Open and brushy forests	Verified in area
Tennessee Warbler	PSOC	Mixed conifer forests	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
Western Screech-Owl	PSOC	Riparian forests	Suitable habitat in area, not verified
An Agapetus Caddisfly ( <i>Agapetus montanus</i> )	PSOC	Fast-flowing streams	Verified in Burdette Creek
Fir Pinwheel ( <i>Radiodiscus abietum</i> )	PSOC	Moist, rocky Douglas-fir or western red cedar forests	Some suitable habitat in area

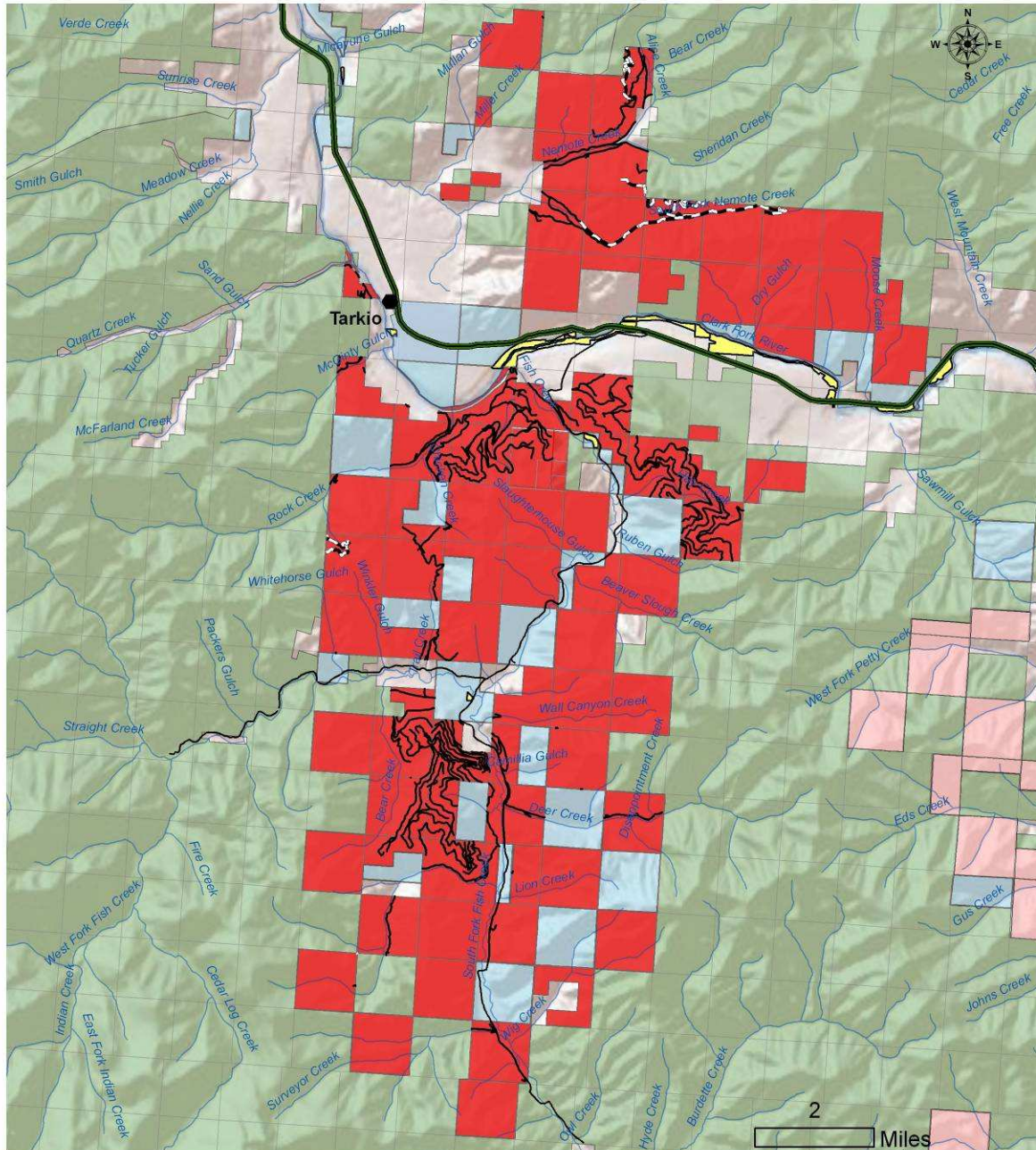
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<i>Additional Tier 1 Species</i>			
Olive-sided Flycatcher	CFWCS Tier 1	Early seral forest/shrub patches, and burned forest	Verified in area



APPENDIX E

# Year-round & Seasonally Open Roads TNC Lands in Fish Creek



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

December 28, 2009  
Data from: MFWP, TNC

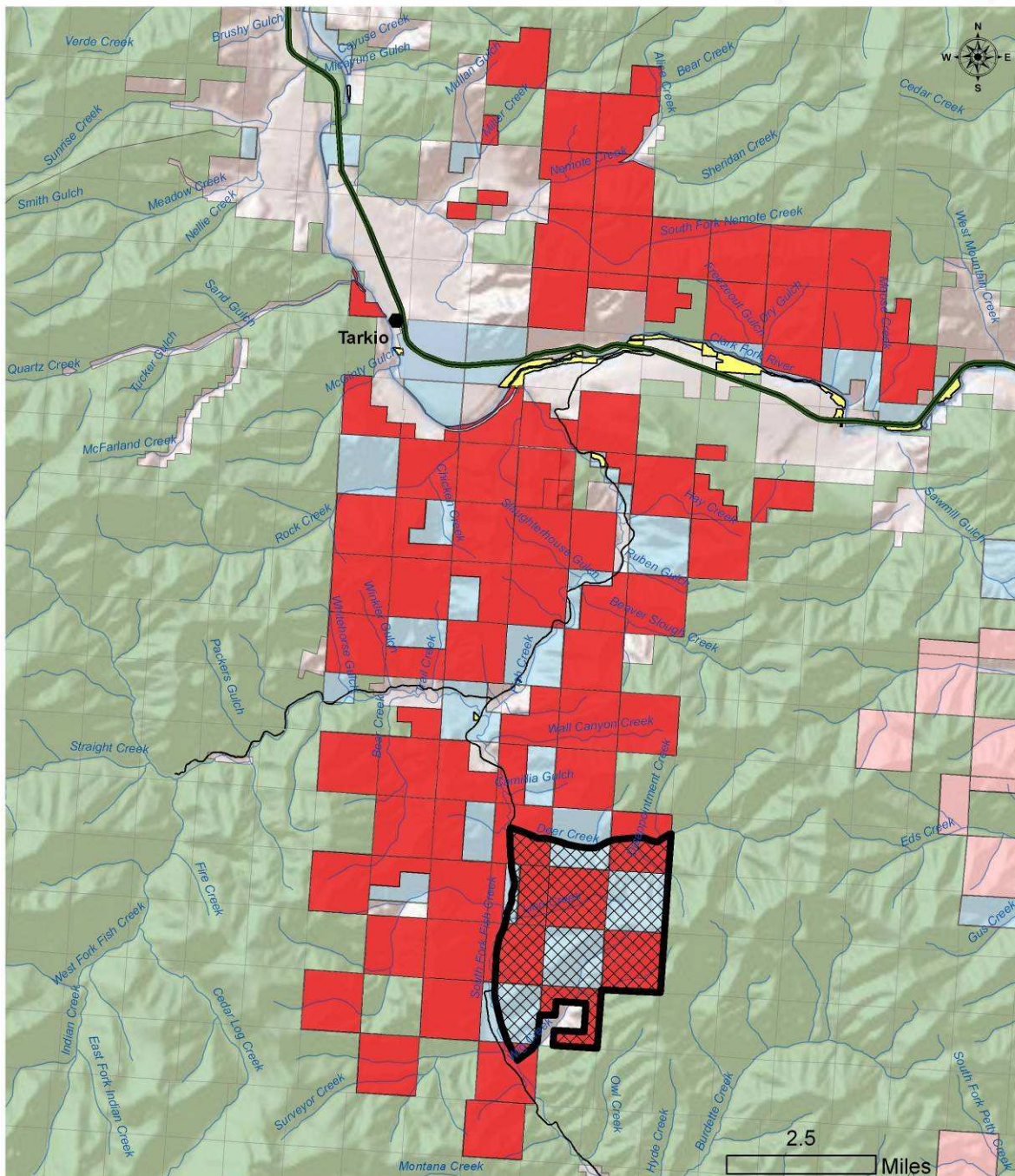
**Legend**

- Main Fish Creek Roads Open Year-round
- The Nature Conservancy - Fish Creek
- The Nature Conservancy
- Fish Creek Roads on TNC Lands
- Gated Seasonally
- Open Year-round
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Montana State Trust Lands
- US Forest Service
- Other Private



APPENDIX F

# Fish Creek WMA Seasonal Closure\* (12/1 - 4/14)



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

December 28, 2009  
Data from: MFWP, TNC

**Legend**

- Closed Portion of WMA
- Main Fish Creek Roads
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Montana State Trust Lands
- The Nature Conservancy - Fish Creek
- US Forest Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- Other Private

\* Boundary contingent on cooperative agreement with DNRC